

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending. A final Office Action mailed December 22, 2004 objected to Claim 4, rejected Claims 1, 2, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and rejected Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. By way of this Amendment, Applicants hereby amend Claims 1, 4, and 7. Pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.116, Applicants hereby respectfully request reconsideration of the application.

OBJECTION OF CLAIMS

The Office Action objected to Claim 4. Applicants hereby amend Claim 4 in order to overcome the noted objection.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 2, and 7 under 35 U.S.C., second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants hereby amend independent Claims 1 and 7 in order to overcome the noted rejection. Thus, Applicants submit that Claims 1, 2, and 7 particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-7 as being unpatentable over Brown et al. (hereinafter Brown) in view of Padawer et al. (hereinafter Padawer). The Office Action states that Brown discloses a document signing system having components for displaying an electronic document, identifying blocks of text for a signature task, uniquely identifying blocks of text, assigning users to the uniquely identified blocks of text, allowing review of the assigned blocks of text, and digital signing of the document. The Office Action further states that Brown, a

document computer-based system, allows for identifying blocks of text, verifying the correctness of blocks of text, and storing and retrieving of various values. The Office Action states that Brown does not explicitly disclose selecting a decline option. The Office Action states that Padawer discloses a system in which a user is offered to accept or decline changes in the document. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Brown to include a decline option in addition to the acceptance option, in order to allow the system to be customized based on the needs of the individual users. With regard to amended independent Claim 1, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants submit that Brown discloses a parser that parses the document to identify the portion to be signed by the signer ... the parser identifies within the document a “to-be-signed” tag for indicating a portion of the document to be signed by the signer (col. 8, lines 35-47). Applicants submit that Brown is only identifying if a portion of the text includes a “to-be-signed” tag and does not uniquely identify blocks of text identified for a signature task. Applicants submit that any portion of text within Brown is identified the same way with the tag or other delimiter. Thus, Applicants submit that Brown fails to teach identifying one or more blocks of text for a task and performing one identification; for uniquely identifying the identified blocks of text. If anything, Brown is only identifying one or more blocks of text for a signature task.

Applicants submit that Padawer discloses that when a document is edited or has been changed in some way, the user is prompted whether they want to accept or decline those changes. Applicants submit that if Padawer were to be combined with the teaching of Brown, then the editing of the document would be accepted or declined before a digital signature is applied. With regard to amended independent Claim 1, Applicants submit that the acceptance and decline options do not save or decline edits of a document being reviewed. The acceptance and decline options are merely a recordation of an acceptance or decline event for a particular

block of text. In other words, does the reviewer accept the text as written or does the reviewer not agree with the text as written.

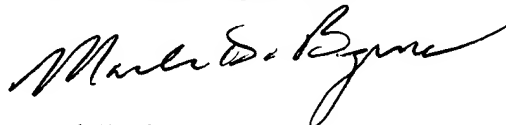
Therefore, Applicants submit that Brown and Padawer, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest uniquely identified blocks of text and acceptance and decline options for assigned blocks of text. Therefore, Applicants submit that amended independent Claim 1 is allowable over the cited references. Because independent Claims 5 and 7 include similar limitations as amended independent Claim 1, they are allowable for the same reasons that make independent Claim 1 allowable. Because Claims 2-4 and 6 depend from allowable independent claims, they are allowable for the same reasons that make their corresponding independent claims allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims of the pending application are now in condition for allowance over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections, allowance, and early passage through issuance. If the examiner has any questions, the examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's agent listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this communication is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via first class mail under 37 C.F.R. § 1.08 on the date indicated below addressed to: MAIL STOP AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

2/16/05
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Michelle Funston-Carman

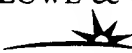
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DOCU-1-1004ROA2

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